

Brookline Preservation Commission

Local Historic District Report

Address: 151 and 153 Babcock Street

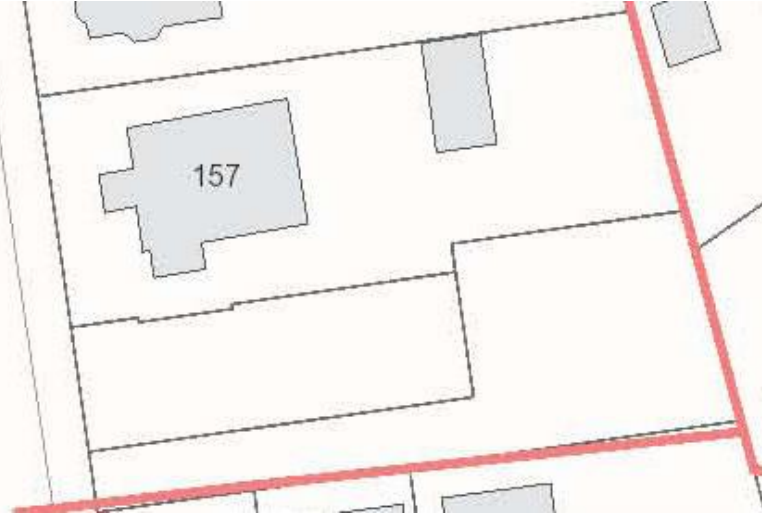
District: Graffam McKay LHD

Applicant: 151-153 Babcock Street LLC

Date Built:

Architect:

Builder:



Statement of Significance:

In 2018, 157 Babcock Street subdivided its lot into three separate lots. This created two new empty, developable lots, according to the Zoning Bylaw, in the Graffam McKay LHD known as 151 and 153 Babcock Street.

Proposed Alterations:

The applicant is proposing to construct two new residential buildings, one on each new vacant parcel. The applicant is proposing a two family structure on the front lot (151) and a single family structure on the rear lot (153).

Applicable Guidelines:

- If a window in new construction has insulating glass and if the division of the lites of glass by muntins is deemed appropriate by the Commission, it should have either true divided lites with muntins no wider than 7/8" or (i) permanently applied muntins no wider than 7/8" and (ii) dark colored internal spacer bars, but it should not have either flat muntin grids applied to the inside or outside panes nor removable muntin grids.
- New and replacement windows should not be clad in non-historic materials. Vinyl or vinyl-clad and metal-framed sash, and replacement windows incorporating external storm panels that are integrated into the sash, should not be used.

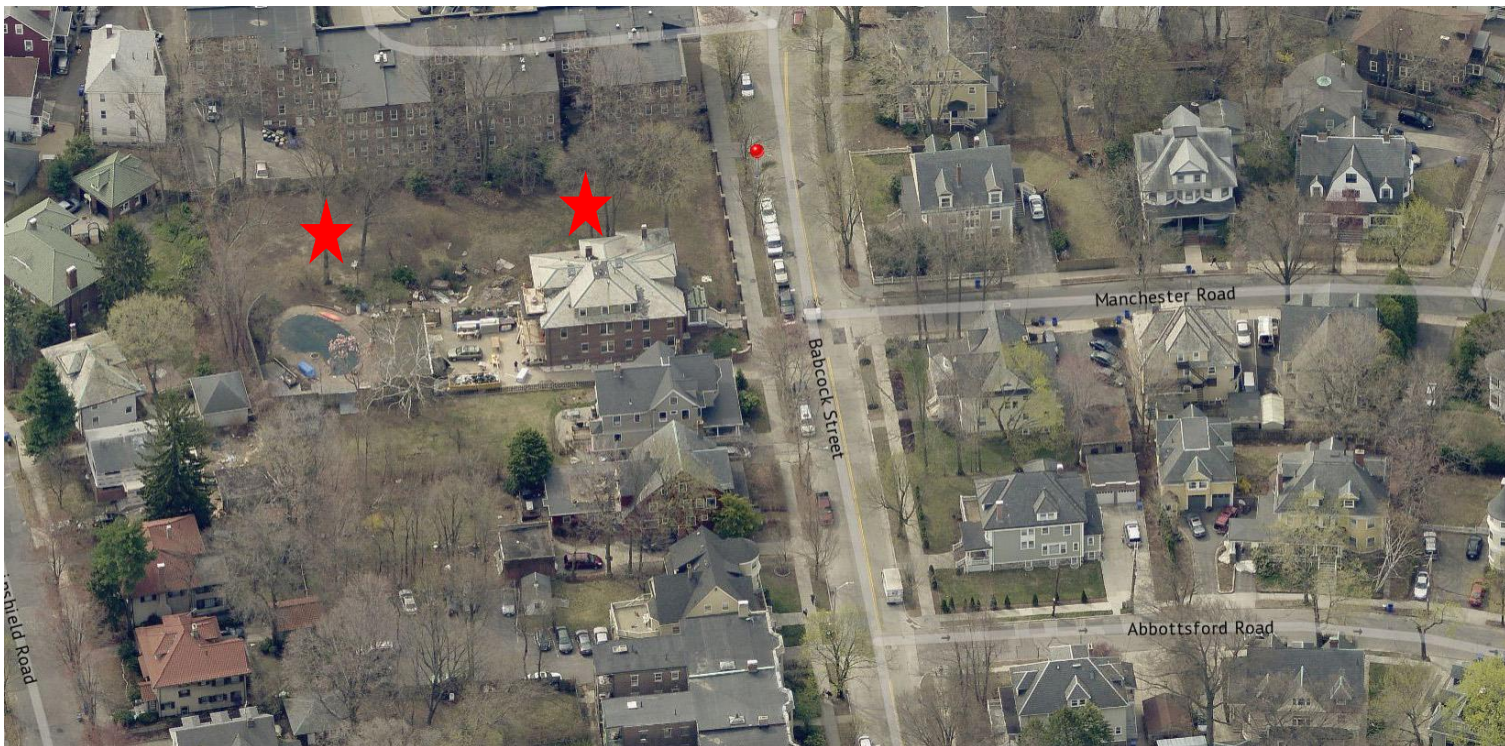
- Masonry walls and iron fences should be maintained.
- New construction should respect the existing historic streetscape. The historic relationship of buildings to the street, including setbacks and open spaces, should be maintained.
- In areas where historic garages are generally detached, new garages should be detached. Attached garages should be located behind the main mass of the house and/or not facing the street, if possible.
- The Commission will consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure in relation to both the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity. The Commission may impose dimensional and setback requirements more restrictive than those required by the Zoning By-law.
- The Commission will consider discrete additions and new buildings incorporating non-historical design vocabularies and materials, as long as they are otherwise consistent with the intent of the Guidelines.

Preliminary Findings:

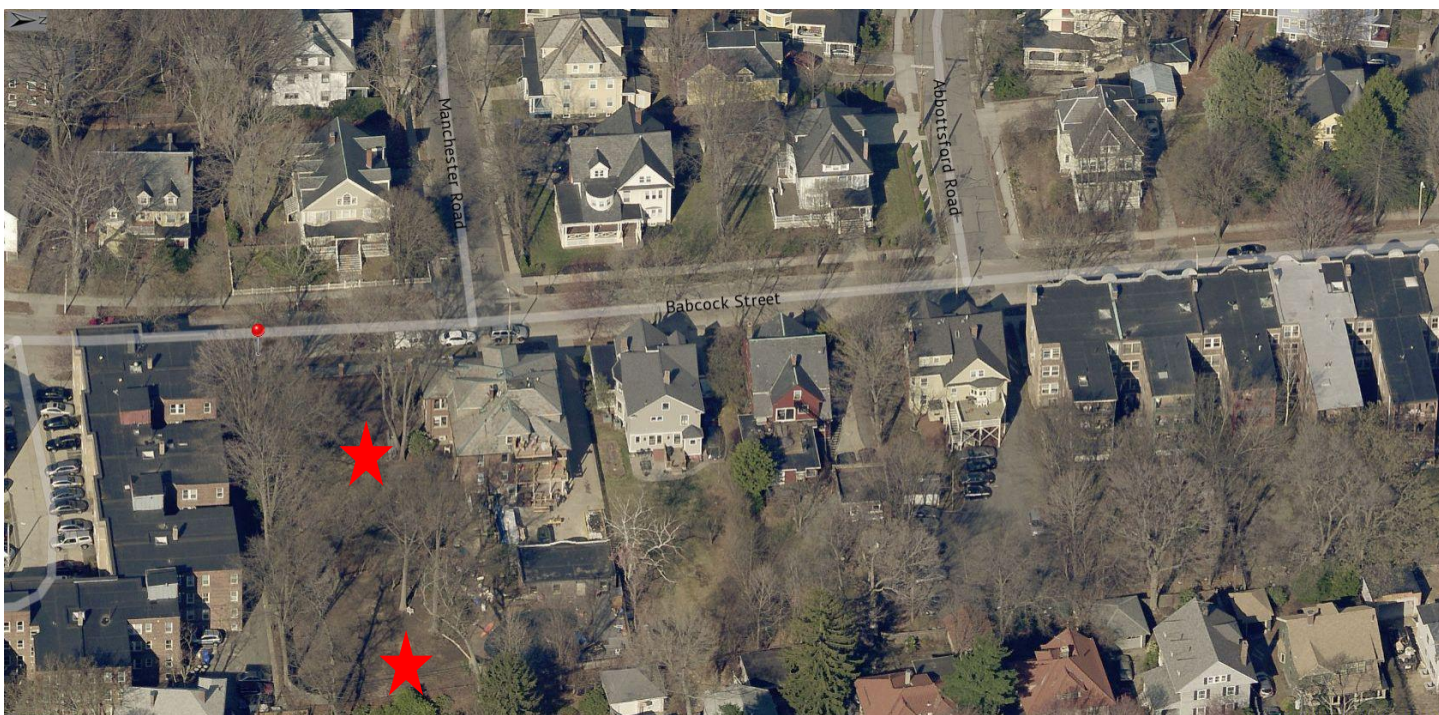
At its September 25, 2019 public hearing the Preservation Commission first reviewed the applicant's proposal as part of an advisory review. The Commission provided the applicant with feedback intended to be incorporated into the application. Comments included that both buildings appeared too large for the site, there was too much asphalt and parking, concerns regarding the number and visibility of the garages, and that the front stairs should face towards the street. The Commission also discussed the location of the proposed shared driveway.

At its November 25, 2019 public hearing the Commission reviewed the application to construct the new dwellings. At the time the applicant was proposing to construct a two family structure on each lot. Additionally, the applicant had altered the driveway to be on the left side of the front structure, and had redesigned the front structure so that the front steps faced and led down to Babcock Street. The Commission had strong concerns including the massing and volume of structures, height, amount of pavement, as well as the grading of the lots, and the overall concern that the applicant was proposing too much for the site.

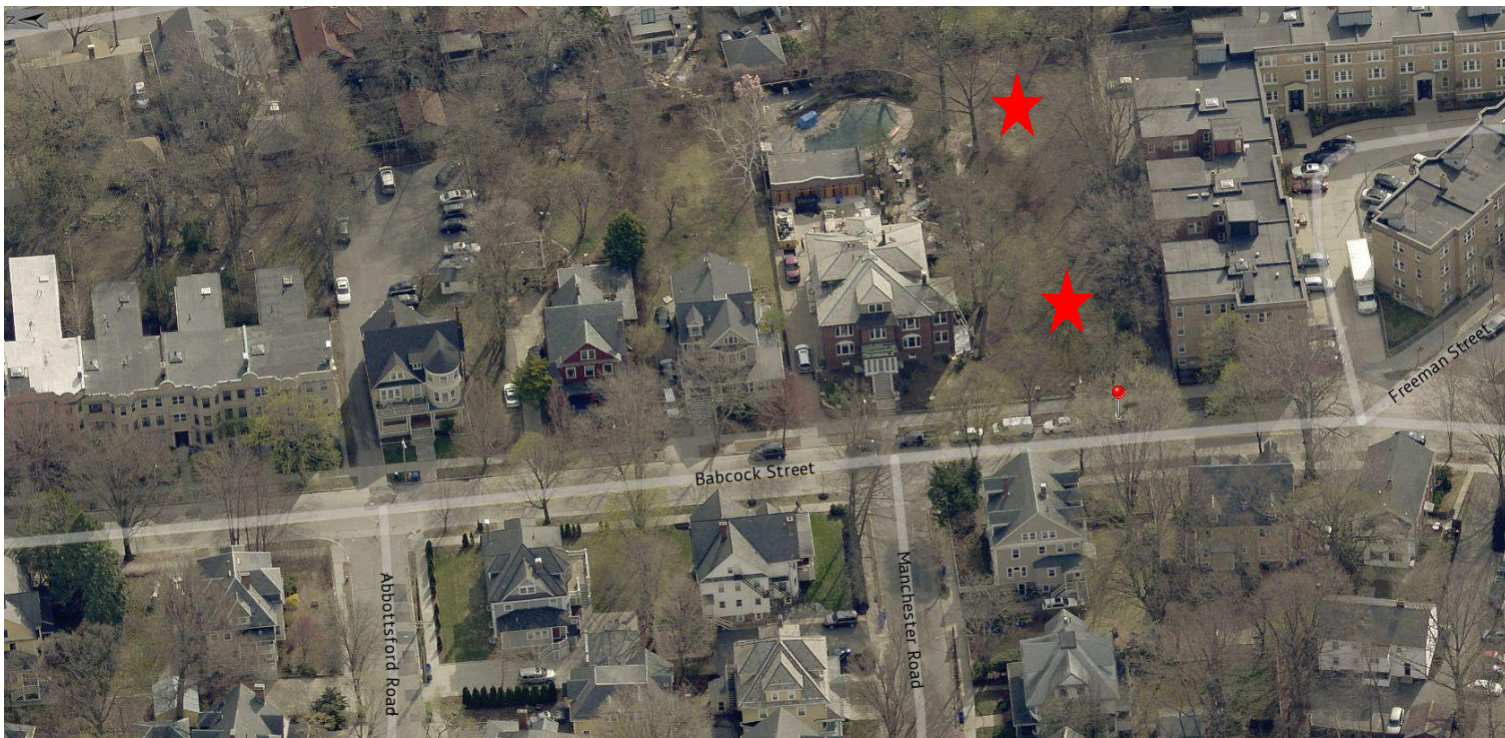
Since the hearing the applicant has met with staff on three different occasions. The most recent iteration of the plans reflect a number of changes, most notably the change in use of the rear lot building from a two to a single family dwelling, which reduced the amount of parking required and a reduction in overall size from 5,928 sf. to 4034 sf. Additionally, the applicant has moved the garage to the right side of the façade of the rear building, in order to conceal it from street view. Both structures have been redesigned with the intention to better fit in with context of the local historic district, and the applicant has provided two working options for the design of the rear building to be reviewed and discussed by the Commission. The applicant is continuing to work on lowering the front structure to be lower to grade and more consistent with other buildings on Babcock Street.



Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking south.



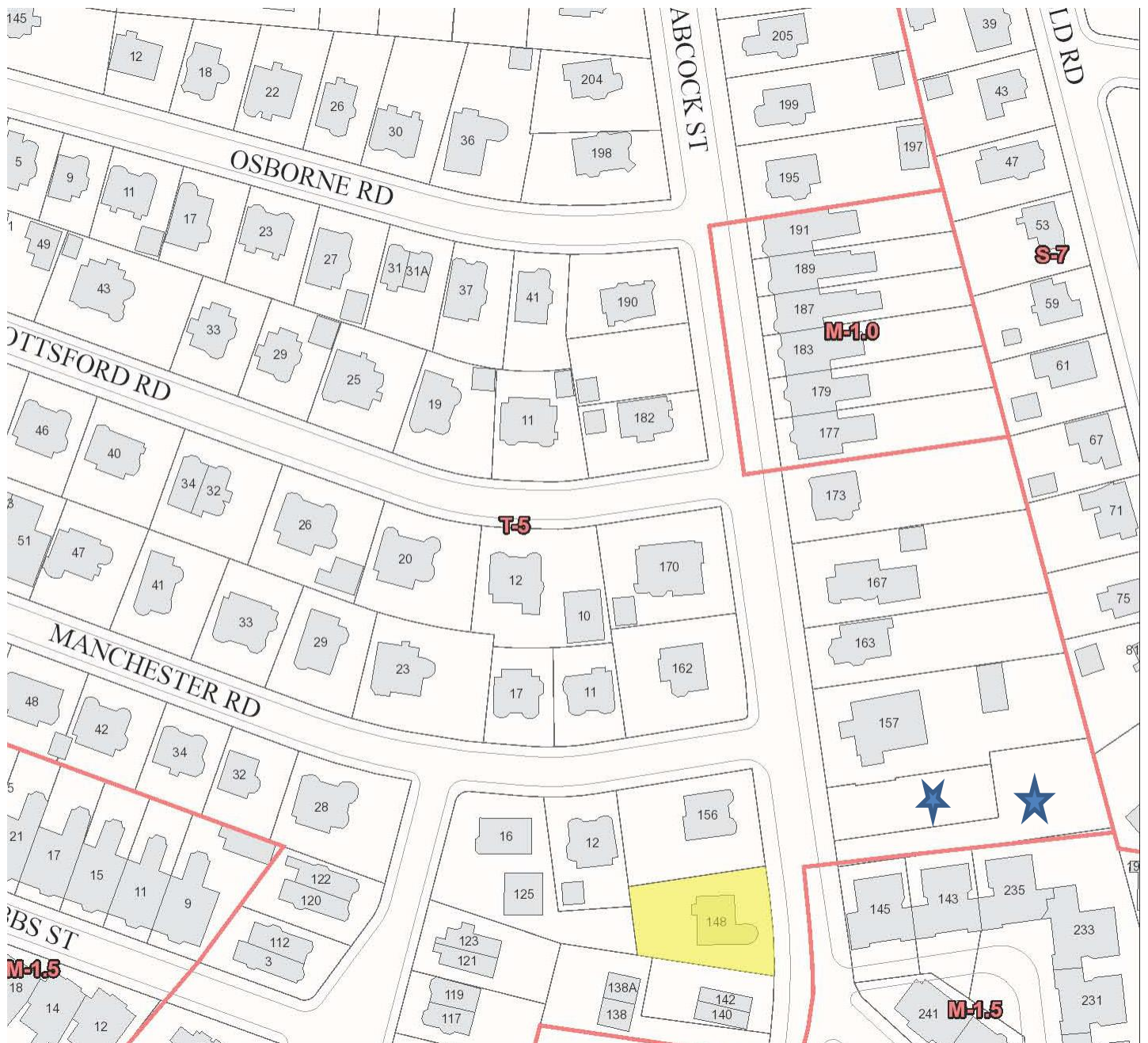
Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking east.



Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking west.



Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking north.



Larger assessor's map of the area and newly created lots (blue stars represent 151 and 153 Babcock Street)



Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left



Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left



Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left



Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left



Photograph of the façade of 150 Babcock Street across the street



Photogrpah of 156 Babcock Street across the street



Photograph of 167 Babcock Street



Photograph of 173 Babcock Street